

Foreword

The First Conference of Polish and Chinese Historians of Art “Poland – China. Art and Cultural Heritage” was organized by the former Polish Society of Oriental Art (now the Polish Institute of World Art Studies) in Warsaw and the Jagiellonian University Center of Chinese Language and Culture “Confucius Institute in Krakow”, in cooperation with the Faculties of Fine Arts of the Tsinghua University in Beijing and Shanghai University, and the Section of Oriental Art at the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń. It took place from September fourteenth to sixteenth 2009 in Collegium Maius – the oldest building of the Jagiellonian University, dating back to the fifteenth century. This old seat of the University, bought by the King of Poland for the academy, was a great place for the historians of art from the most important Chinese and Polish universities, as well as young Polish scholars, to exchange their knowledge about Polish and Chinese art history and about the artistic connections between the two countries.

The idea of the conference was different from the others organized by the Society Institute. Its main goal was to arrange a direct meeting between scholars of two nations, which have very different cultures, but share similar historical experiences, especially of nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The international agreement on cultural exchange, signed in 1949 between Poland and China, was the first such agreement ratified by the newly proclaimed People's Republic of China. It granted a high rank to the contacts between the two countries, and its effect was an exchange of exhibitions, theatre performances, film shows, translations of literature, and also many study trips made by scientists and artists. They had a significant impact on the artistic life and on society as a whole, both in Poland and China.

The Polish Institute of World Art Studies, the Jagiellonian University's “Confucius Institute in Krakow” and the Section of Oriental Art of the Nicolaus Copernicus University, pay great attention to studying the arts of China and Sino-Polish artistic relations. Many books and collections of articles, as well as the papers presented by historians and conservationists during the biennial Meetings of Polish Art Historians and Restorers of Oriental Works of Art in Toruń, are the best examples of this. The first conference devoted exclusively to China, which hosted many scientists from China, Germany, Italy and the Czech Republic, was entitled “Sztuka Chin – Art of China,” and was held in 2008 in Warsaw. The conference proceedings, in Polish and English, were published a year later, also in Warsaw (ISBN 978-83-7543-098-1).

The Jagiellonian University Center of Chinese Language and Culture “Confucius Institute in Krakow,” the first “Confucius Institute” in Poland, aims at promoting knowledge about China in Poland, both by teaching Chinese and organizing popular-

-scientific activities for the wide public, and by promoting scientific exchange and co-operation between Poland and China. This conference is a part of a series of scientific meetings on a variety of subjects, like the Confucian tradition in modern world (the proceedings were published in the volume *Confucian Tradition: Towards a New Century*, edited by Adam Jelonek and Bogdan Zemanek), the rise of China as a modern superpower, Chinese popular culture, problems and opportunities for teaching Chinese as foreign language in the countries of Eastern Europe and many others. There is much to be done in the field of Chinese studies in Poland, so the Center actively cooperates with many institutions and societies in organizing scientific and cultural activities. One of such cooperation agreements is the one signed in 2008 with the Society of Oriental Art.

The conference in Krakow was organized in such a way as to allow the participants to learn about both cultures, thanks to equal attention paid to problems pertaining to Polish and Chinese art; the papers were grouped into three broad sections, presented in three subsequent days. The first section, dealing with basic problems of Polish art since 1945, bore the title *Polish Art in the European Context*; the second section – *Chinese Art and Art Relations between Poland and China* – discussed main problems related to Chinese arts, as well to Chinese art collecting and existing collections, to Chinese gardens and *chinoiserie* in Poland; and also to Polish architecture in Harbin. The third section – *Modern and Contemporary Art in Poland and China* – dealt with Chinese inspirations in Polish art, Polish artists in China, as well as with the questions of occidentalization of the Chinese art and reception of Polish and Chinese art in each of these two countries. Chinese participants also had a chance to visit monuments of art in Cracow and in Warsaw during their stay.

The idea of the conference was first conceived during Professor Jerzy Malinowski and Dr. Joanna Wasilewska's (vice-president of the Polish Institute of World Art Studies) visit to China. They were invited by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing and the Academy of Social Sciences in Shanghai, and these two institutions helped to arrange meetings at Tsinghua University and Shanghai University, which brought about the concrete plans and programs of the conference and the visit of Chinese scholars in Poland. We are especially grateful to Professor Zhang Gan (Tsinghua University) for cooperating with us during the organizational stage.

The Jagiellonian University Center of Chinese Language and Culture "Confucius Institute in Krakow" arranged the venue for the meeting in Collegium Maius and covered the expenses related to hosting the Conference and to the Chinese guests' stay in Cracow.

We would especially like to thank the Ministry of International Affairs of the Republic of Poland for its grant which enabled us to invite the Chinese delegation to Poland. The grant was a part of Ministry's "Promotion of Knowledge on Poland" program.

The conference proceedings will also be published in Chinese. The organizers wish to thank Adam Mickiewicz Institute in Warsaw for financing the translation, done by the team headed by Dr. Marcin Jacoby.

We would also like to thank Dr. Joanna Wasilewska, who collected and edited the articles presented in this book; Ms Magdalena Furmanik-Kowalska, and Ms Dobromiła Uhma-Miechowicz, secretary of the conference, for their work.

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